



GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

FEBRUARY 2016 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

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Photo By Tim Wagner

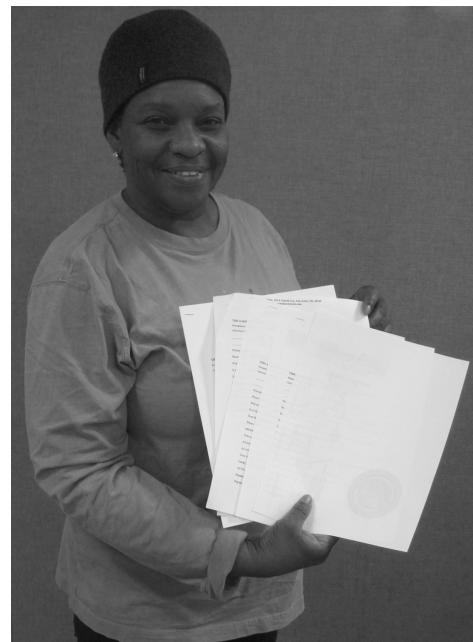
Local heroes respond to International Vendor Week



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

The determination and zeal of one person can certainly make a difference within a community. This lesson was driven home to me last month as I was sinking into despair over my perceived powerlessness to change the course of self-destruction on which it seems our state and national leaders are set.

One person, Groundcover News vendor Lit Kurtz, heard about International Vendor Week and set forth with a great vision. She dipped into her bag of school teacher tools and called for a county-wide Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) of Groundcover News. She personally enrolled several local businesses and the St. Mary Small



Lit with the ad contracts for the seven ads she sold in support of Vendor Week.

Church Community to participate in a February group reading session. Other plucky supporters may read this and initiate a reading within their own groups, and perhaps this will build so that next year it will be observed schoolwide and beyond. Many new eyes will be opened to the realities of poverty and possibilities for action as a result of this.

Lit also set about arousing the opportunities for local businesses to show their support for Groundcover News vendors by purchasing ad space in the newspaper in honor of Vendor Week. Seven chose to do so, nearly all as a result of Lit's personal requests. She has inspired me and opened other vendors' eyes to the possibilities of selling ads (for

which they receive commissions). Next year she hopes to see whole pages of ads devoted to vendor appreciation.

Inspired by her example, several of us approached the Ann Arbor City Council and Mayor about issuing a resolution of support for Groundcover News vendors at the start of February. Councilman Warpehoski and Mayor Taylor quickly agreed to help with this and Mayor Taylor also accepted our request to be a guest vendor on the first of February, and he is shown on the cover practicing with Lit

I can't tell you how affirming all this support is to the people who sell Groundcover News. To know that they are valued members of the community, offering an appreciated service, bolsters them against the slurs and taunts to which they are occasionally subjected. It gives them the courage to dream bigger and find ways to improve their situations. It instills pride.

And it should be noted that this chain of events was possible because of the

actions of another individual – a local landlord who made it easy for Lit to rent from him. With the ensuing stability, she was able to concentrate on making a larger difference. His actions, in turn, sprang from those of his daughter – a local student who buys Groundcover regularly and shared about it with her father.

So many people around the area have contributed to the survival and security of our less fortunate neighbors, and it is paying dividends. It appears that enough people have been housed that the Delonis Center's Warming Center and Rotating Shelter program will be sufficient to accommodate those needing emergency overnight shelter this winter, and the emergency overflow shelters hosted by area churches will not be needed.

Some of the people who have gotten housing, like Lit, are making strides contributing to their workplaces and communities. And I'll sustain myself with that this month.



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Taming Trump

Dear Editor,

Donald Trump has now used his outsized millions to showcase all the worst attitudes of post-Reagan America. While he probably won't get the nomination anyway, he has drawn the inequalities of our society into sharp focus. Hopefully this will hand a third presidential reign to Democrats next November.

Paul Lambert

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A child's response to homelessness

I do not like seeing homeless people. They are not as lucky as some of us. I like to help out by buying the Groundcover newspaper, because it often has yummy recipes that I like. My family puts away food each night for families that are struggling.

My school (Wines Elementary) does "Lunches with Love." Each class makes sandwiches and puts in fruit or fruit snacks and something to drink. I would like more people to help out to end homelessness in this country. Maybe make more fund drives.

Many people are scared of homeless people but I think there is no reason to be scared, because after all they are people just like everyone else. In my opinion, I think anyone can get homeless, so why just walk by a homeless person and not pay any attention? How would you feel if you were that person? So the next time you see a homeless person, help out and make a better community.

Ashe Baskey

LOOKING WITHIN

A melody for all



by Rev. Dr. Martha
Brunell
Groundcover
Contributor

A choir sang before Christmas in a small rural church. The singers were glad to be together. The church had been between music directors the previous couple of months. It had been a while since the choir last sang in worship. The choir regulars were there along with a few extras. Everyone hoped the extras would stay and swell the ranks of the regulars in the future. When they got themselves situated up front among all the special decorations for the season, one of the choir members took a seat in a wheelchair. The chair had been discreetly stored behind the Christmas tree until it was needed.

The choir member seated in the chair has lived with Parkinson's disease for more than eight years. Over that time he has navigated a number of changes. He no longer commutes into O'Hare International Airport. There his last agriculture-related job required him to carefully inspect shipments of different organic materials arriving into the country by air.

He reluctantly agrees to rely on a walker some of the time. His grown children decorated it a while back to resemble a piece of John Deere equipment, all green and yellow. He calls it Fred.

He no longer drives or tends the lawn atop a riding mower, although he stubbornly maintains a large garden of spices, asparagus, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, summer squash and pumpkins grown for the October delight of a number of children. In

earlier seasons of work, he utilized his considerable skill as a soil specialist; he continues to garden now from that knowledge. This time of year he is poring over seed catalogues.

His privacy, like his mobility, is curtailed. Instability on his feet and frequent falls have necessitated a live-in caregiver. Frequently he has much he wants to say and knows the frustration of getting mid-sentence and having the rest of his thought recede beyond where it can be reached. Through it all, he is generous, caring, and very funny. His wife tells me the first part of him that she fell in love with was his humor. It is fortunate for us that his humor has resisted the ongoing erosion of Parkinson's.

He was uneasy about singing from that chair just before Christmas and wondered if his sitting would be a distraction. Someone he has known forever stood beside him, holding the music at a level where they both saw it easily. A couple of days after the service, he was still worried his presence in the chair might have been upsetting to others.

What those others saw from the choir and from the pews was a visualization of their faith community that they hoped would always be true. Before them was an image of a place with a commitment to figure out ways for everyone to give the gifts they have brought. It was a gathering where vulnerabilities and strengths were shared. In that musical circle, differences led to a wider understanding of the breadth, width and depth of human experience.

He was concerned about being in the chair. Those around him were grateful for the view it gave of their church and for the challenge it presented them that

day and every day. The point wasn't perfection but the most inclusive embrace possible.

A choir sang before Christmas in a small rural church. Beholding that singing moment, my mind and heart wandered to the collection of people who call themselves Groundcover News. We too are a blend of strength and vulnerability. As we mutually help one another carry our offerings for the

common good and understanding, we may find ourselves standing, sitting down because we are wobbly, bursting with thought or pausing to try to remember fully what we wanted to express. We seek to acknowledge with one another both this moment and the diverse days that have come before and that will follow. Our stories are layered and complicated. We want to find a melody where each of our voices can join.

Kind words: ancient wisdom

by Aimee Patricia Ciccarelli
Groundcover Vendor #112

The story about the sword of Damocles resonates today. Damocles was a ruler in ancient Sicily. Dionysius was a member of his court; he was also an excessive flatterer and a gossip. In particular, he liked to talk about Damocles and his affairs – political, financial, romantic and otherwise.

So Damocles, in order to teach Dionysius a lesson, invited him to a feast. When Dionysius was seated at the feast, he looked above him and saw a sword suspended by a single hair from Damocles' own unruly mane. This was to let him know that he was on thin ice.

The moral of this story is that talking about other people has consequences. So, say you're in a circle of people and someone is talking about a subject that is inappropriate. You just say, "Hey,

"the sword of Damocles is hanging over your head." It's like a code to say stop talking.

If someone is gossiping about you, remembering other wisdom from the past, let it roll off you like water off a duck's back; turn the other cheek – and a kind word turns away wrath. So try to remember to keep a kind word for those that you know.

It is also a good practice to greet people whom you pass on the street. Too many of us walk around in our own little world with our cell phones and earbuds. We have lost touch with personal human interaction. I personally like to compliment people I see on the street. You never know how a kind word may bring up a person's self-esteem. So, like they say in the movie *Bambi*, if you ain't got nothin' nice to say, then don't say nothin' at all. God Bless and be well.

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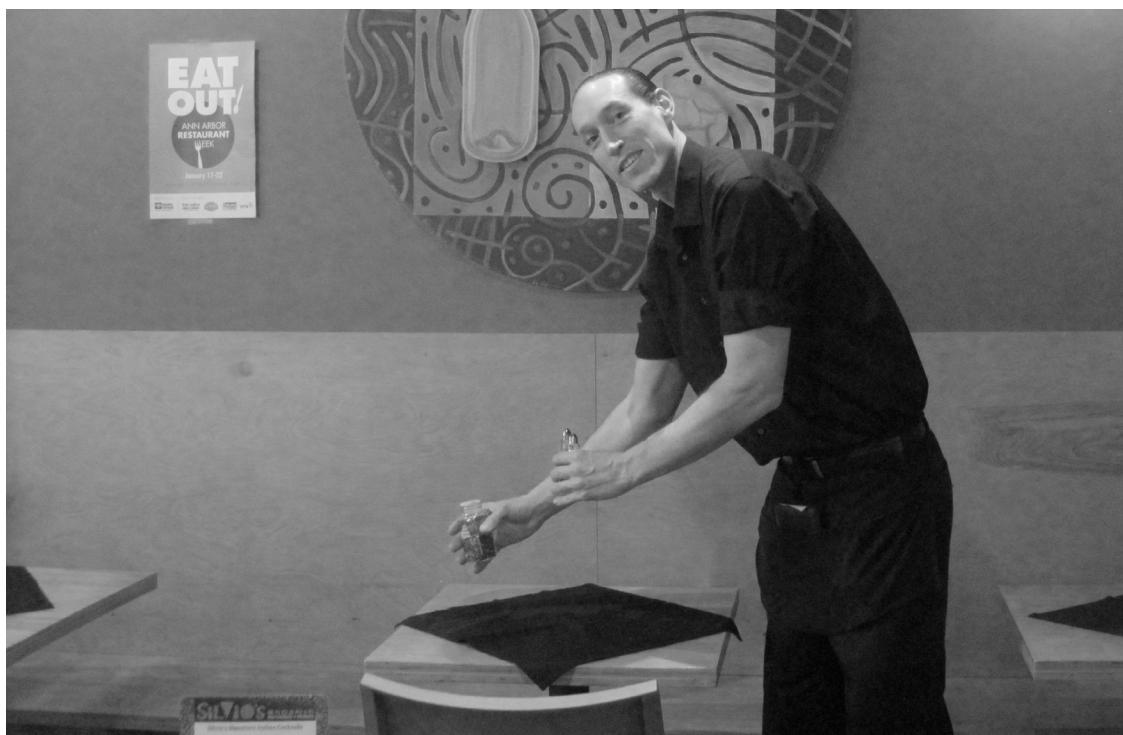
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More than selling papers



Kevin Spangler setting tables at Silvios, one of the part-time jobs he has in addition to attending classes and selling Groundcover News.

by Olivia Perfetti
U-M Student Contributor

Every single person on this planet has a story. People interact in many ways, but rarely do we have the chance to learn things about people below the surface level. Sometimes, though, all it takes is a simple conversation.

How much do you know about the person who sold you this newspaper? Even if you talked for a couple minutes, there's still more to learn. Here's a little about two of Groundcover's vendors and the work they do.

Some vendors have worked for Groundcover for years. I interviewed Lit Kurtz, a vendor who started selling papers in 2013. Over the last several years, she has learned the ins and outs of selling and has planned out a solid working schedule.

"Much of it is different from when I first started. When I first started there was no rhyme or reason. I would get up and stand in different corners. Now I sell in [the same place] most days. I sell [there] from about 8-9:30 and then I move further into town. And then I go back to sell in the evenings. I'm a writer. [Being an independent contractor] gives me time to do my writing and work on some other projects. I'm trying to put out a rap album. But every day I try to get out and sell. I sometimes don't when it's raining; [instead] I do office work. I write and try to get my eBay business up."

Selling newspapers efficiently is clearly a skill, and one that this particular vendor has gotten better at over time. Participating in workshops with Joe Woods, another experienced vendor who is now also the sales coordinator,

has also been helpful to her.

"Since I've worked with Joe, my approach is different. My sales grew dramatically when I started asking [direct questions]. I might say different things: have you gotten the paper yet, do you know about Groundcover, may I ask you a question?"

Unfortunately, not everybody responds politely to these questions.

"Most people ignore me. A lot of people say 'No, thank you.' A few people imply that I'm not actually working. For the most part, the response is pretty nice. I think we've come to a place where people aren't that mean anymore. It's just really bad when people ignore me."

The impoliteness may partly result from ignorance and society's lack of understanding of homelessness.

"In all fairness, I don't think some people have a sense of the direction homeless aid should be going. The whole mindset has to shift. I think people have the wrong perception of who the homeless are. There just needs to be a paradigm shift. We're really behind in understanding the issues of homelessness in society. A lot of the time people will only respond if something is on the media. Everybody gives to that person when the media brings it up."

"There is also blatant stereotyping. [The most common one is] that people who are homeless are lazy and that we're not victims. [In truth], we are victims and people need to recognize that. And I have no idea where it started. It's persisted into a lot of generations."

Kurtz says that one of the best ways to understand homelessness is by getting involved with Groundcover.

see PAPERS, page 9

Happy Vendor's Week!



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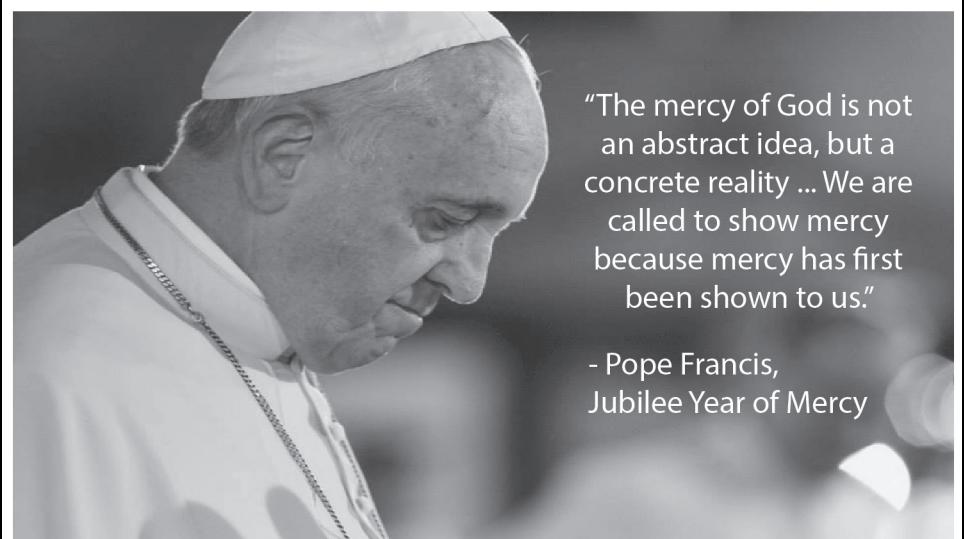
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"The mercy of God is not an abstract idea, but a concrete reality ... We are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us."

- Pope Francis,
Jubilee Year of Mercy

A Washtenaw ID for allies

by Olivia Temrowksi and Nicole Novak
Groundcover Contributors

This article is part of a series of vignettes describing individuals who have received their Washtenaw County IDs. For more information, please visit www.washtenawid.com.

Imagine picking up a copy of Groundcover News and finding yourself inspired to join a movement to strengthen your community. This is what happened to Arlene Huff – Washtenaw County resident, retired social worker, and social justice advocate – when she read a Groundcover article about the Washtenaw County ID last May.

Arlene had been on the lookout for a new way to get involved in the community, and the Washtenaw ID, a County-issued photo ID card designed to increase access to important services for all members of our diverse community, fit the bill. “That’s what I want to do!” she recalls thinking.

Beginning with the ID Project launch in June 2015, Arlene joined other volunteers as part of the ID Support Clinic at the County Clerk’s office in downtown Ann Arbor. ID applicants relied on the support of volunteers like Arlene as they learned about the eligibility criteria and sorted through the identity



documents they would use for their applications.

“It was fun. We could have even handled many more people!” says Arlene.

As Arlene learned about the many situations in which ID holders hoped to use their Washtenaw IDs, she realized that there was another way she could support them: by carrying and using the Washtenaw ID herself! Before she knew it, Arlene was in line for her very own Washtenaw County ID.

“That’s the role an ally can play. We’re all in this together.”

Arlene realized that using a Washtenaw

ID, even though she already has access to a state-issued driver’s license, is one of the best ways to stand in solidarity with those whose only form of identification is the County ID. She points out that the County ID, like anything new, will raise questions and spark curiosity throughout our community. By using the Washtenaw ID herself, she can help make sure the County ID is seen as much as possible by business owners and service providers.

“I like using the card. Give me the grief – I can cope with it – but don’t give it to somebody who is dealing with a whole bunch of other things. I can kind of pave the way, so to speak. So, that way, if a cashier sees it from someone else, they can think, ‘I don’t have to give her a hard time; I gave Arlene a hard time.’”

More recently, Arlene has been spreading the word about the Washtenaw ID to individuals and communities who could benefit from a Washtenaw ID card. At the Pittsfield Senior Center, the St. Andrew’s Church breakfast, and most recently the emergency warming center for individuals experiencing homelessness, Arlene distributes program brochures on a regular basis.

Allies can support the Washtenaw ID Project in many different ways. Arlene is but one great example of what we can do to stand alongside and support fellow members of our community.

“I’m just part of the whole thing. We all have our part to play, and mine is the ally. We are all the same under the skin – maybe you do not need an ID yourself, but it could be any of us.”

Allies, by supporting their neighbors and raising awareness about the Washtenaw ID, can serve an important role in efforts to make our community stronger and healthier.

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The first Groundcover vendor

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz
Groundcover Vendor #159

As we celebrate International Street Paper Vendor Week (February 1-7), we join in with thousands of street paper vendors around the world. Some 25 years after the first modern street paper began, a young man in Ann Arbor was the first to answer the call of publisher Susan Beckett to become a Groundcover vendor.

Though the third man in his family with the same name – Louis – he is by Groundcover lineage the *first* to step up and begin growing the circulation of a local street paper.

The years have taken their toll on Louis. He struggles to chew a healthy snack of trail mix as we speak about his life. He reveals an alcohol addiction that began during his sophomore year in high school and has plagued him most of his life – through marriages, jobs, and spells of homelessness. He feels alcohol also contributed to the four years he spent in prison.

Having a parent who was also an alcoholic didn't help. He recalls that his mother drank liquor while he was still



Groundcover vendor number one, Louis, with article author and friend Lit Kurtz.

at home and he would accompany her, drinking a large 40-ounce beer of his own.

He has tried treatment and has had periods of being sober. He is struggling to overcome the addiction, and for the sake of his four-year-old daughter, is convinced that he can.

The son of a retired Ann Arbor principal, Louis is at a loss as to how his life could have gone so wrong, even

with his alcoholism. He went through the Ann Arbor school system attending Bach Elementary, Slauson Middle School, and Pioneer High.

He says he was treated unfairly and had privileges revoked at the local shelter, the Delonis Center, so he is unable to get some of the services that might help him get back on his feet. However, Louis remains positive. He has a plan this year to get back into a treatment program that he feels can benefit him

more now than in the past, when his youthful attitude prevented him from taking advantage of what it had to offer. With experience, he now knows that he had opportunities that he should have taken.

Before entering that program, he hopes to participate in International Street Paper Vendor Week. Louis remembers the unique challenges of being among Groundcover's first vendors. Graffiti Alley was one of his first spots. Many people were not yet aware of the fledgling street paper and were puzzled about the concept. He recalls that many of the college students were not as receptive as they are now.

As the street paper model has taught us, no matter how far one has gotten off track, you can always start again to work your way back to stability. Louis endeavors to do just that. So with any luck you will be able to meet and buy a paper from him. Between selling papers, he may have time to chat with customers about the early days of Groundcover. If I have my way, he'll be the only vendor wearing a crown.

Good luck, Louis!

Did You Know the Praying Mantis Eats Her Mate?

by Karen L. Totten
Groundcover Contributor

Nature teaches us these: the horse, nobility; the bear, patience.

So determined is the sea turtle upon the beach as she scoops a sandy nest for her eggs.

And more quietly, a mouse and cardinal circle around my patio floor

sharing sunflower seeds. On the door screen, a praying mantis waits,

sincere petitioner for reprieve, or maybe forgiveness.

Nature teaches to be aware of the many ways of life.

Some moments speak to instinct. Some moments break us open—

hatchlings surprised, awake, standing amid the busted shells

of our former incarnations.

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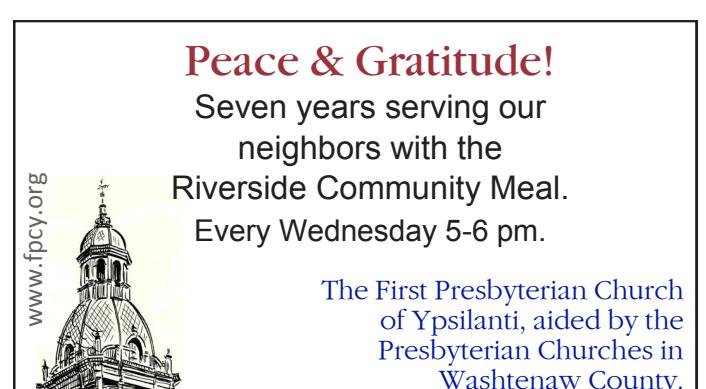
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A vendor's perspective on the Slow Food movement

by Kevin Spangler
Groundcover Vendor #307

First, a personal update for those of you who read my "Life Goals" article in the January issue: I have enrolled full-time at Washtenaw Community College for a liberal arts degree. I now have a job serving at Silvio's Organic Pizzeria on North University in Ann Arbor. And I am now a proud father of a baby boy.

Slow Food

I suffered from taking medications because I was trained to think I needed them. I turned 18 and was set free in this world to learn what life is about. I chose to enroll in the school of hard-knocks – a free school but a very costly one. I was lucky to meet an older woman who saved my life and pointed me in the right direction.

She taught me about eating nothing processed and to only shop on the perimeter of the grocery store – to not eat anything that comes in a package. This eventually led to me learning more about being healthy.

I learned about the Slow Food movement while working with the family at Silvio's. Slow food is produced or prepared in accordance with local culinary traditions, typically using high-quality, locally-sourced ingredients. Slow food is an international movement dating back to 1986 and founded by Italian activist Carlo Petrini. Promoted as an alternative to fast food, it strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and en-



Kevin carries a tray of rapini, a traditional Italian vegetable, from its prep station at Silvio's Organic Pizzeria.

courages farming of plants. By simply adopting a slow food lifestyle, you will change your life while building a stronger local economy.

What can you do to join the slow food movement? Start shopping at your local farmers market. Grow and cook your own food. If you don't have time to prepare your own foods, there are local restaurants and delis that support the slow food movement. Cut packaged and processed foods out of your diet. Start a garden – even a small window garden is a good start. I am proud to work at Silvio's Organic Pizzeria, as Silvio is a proponent of the slow food movement. He also accommodates special diets and takes great care in avoiding cross-contaminations. If you have

any dietary restrictions, this is the place for you.

Silvio's is truly a cultural gem; it is very rare to find a restaurant that serves real Italian recipes made by its owners – like Catia and Silvio Medoro, who have a passion for delicious food. It is even rarer to find such a restaurant family that also sources all of their ingredients locally and organically, and offers gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian options for almost every dish.

The pastries are made the way Silvio made them in Italy, and they are some of the best pastries I have ever tasted. Even the drink selection is carefully thought-out to reflect what you would drink in Italy. We serve Italian wines, liquors, liqueurs, and beers, and even have an organic selection of beer, kombuchas, wines and liquor. We make all of our coffee drinks with organic, Italian-style espresso, and we have tons of organic teas, sodas, and other soft drinks.

Basically, what I'm saying is that Silvio's doesn't cut corners on making the experience truly Italian and, at the same time, supporting the local economy and promoting healthy eating

– all great things.

The music events there are also great. They have the band, Back Porch Swing, come in to play jazz and classical sets every other Thursday, poetry nights on occasion, a pianist every Sunday during the dinner hours, and the group Classical Revolution comes to play at Silvio's frequently. From the piano in the corner to the Italian music on the radio to the herb garden that grows on the back wall, Silvio's creates an atmosphere where you can enjoy Italian food and culture, knowing that your food came from local organic farms. Come in and ask us about our Silvio's CSA pizza and pastry package.

A few healthy living tips

Add positive things such as live fruits and vegetables to your diet. Drink more water. Get more oxygen (that's a form of food, too!) to increase the capability of your brain's power. I do heavy breathing exercises while walking in the morning on my brisk 30-minute walk. Every time I use the phone I take a few deep breaths, then I feel my brain is working at optimal performance and I am making better decisions. Start with five minutes of heavy breathing in the morning and five at night and work your way up to 15 minutes each session. This heavy breathing practice gets your lymphatic system moving, aiding the efficient removal of waste and toxins from the body.

Nurture your body and mind and you will be on the path to wellness.



Be merciful as the Father is merciful

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday

5:00 p.m.

Sunday

7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

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Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:
contact@groundcovernews.com
734-707-9210

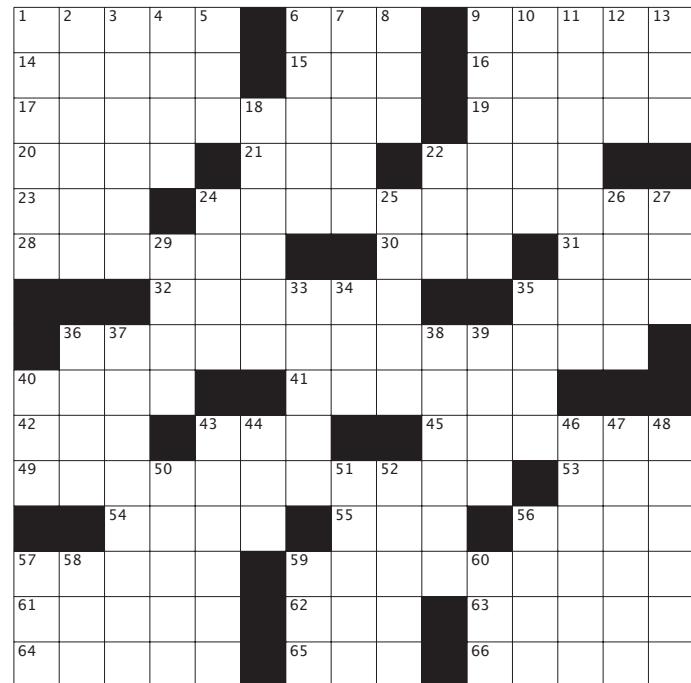
Be Upfront Peter A. Collins

ACROSS

1. Small group
6. New York baseball player
9. Winfrey, of "The Color Purple"
14. Take ___ of faith
15. Quarterback Manning
16. Sierra ___ (African country)
17. Hibernation pains?
19. ___ card
20. Toll booth unit
21. Dispenser in most casinos: Abbr.
22. Egg-shaped
23. Hawaiian necklace
24. Mental lapses?
28. Fictional Arabian sailor
30. "___ the fields we go"
31. MPH, for instance
32. Multiple Grammy-winner Krause
35. Ancient Greek with a paradox
36. Podiatrists?
40. Touch down, as an airplane
41. Loosens
42. Egyptian cobra
43. 2003 Will Ferrell film
45. Gas, across the Atlantic
49. Adam and Eve's snake, for instance?
53. Gent on a cent, for short
54. Big movie format
55. ___ out (eliminates)
56. French holy women: Abbr.
57. Tune sung over egg nog
59. Places to buy and sell Simpson's memorabilia?
61. Centers of development?
62. Letters on a church
63. Ballerina's position
64. Jason's jilted love
65. "Shoot"
66. Geoffrey of fashion

DOWN

1. Secret factions
2. Anastasia's only brother
3. Include, at a card table
4. Hard to find
5. Superfund org.



(Published via Across Lite)

6. Former New York Philharmonic conductor Zubin	35. Pizzazz
7. Varnish resin	36. After walking, you stand on one
8. Frank McCourt memoir	37. Like a single sock
9. Twist, in England?	38. Most ready
10. Kind of code	39. Intense
11. 1962 and 1969 Grand Slam winner in tennis	40. Igor's workplace
12. Chemical suffix for 13-Down	43. List shortener
13. Curse	44. Bagel topper
18. Heart-related: prefix	46. Ostrich or emu
22. Poem of tribute	47. Actress Merle of "Wuthering Heights"
24. "___ Hai" ("South Pacific" song)	48. Tenant
25. Dusty Springfield's "Oh ___ My Baby"	50. Jamboree treat
26. Desires	51. Tests
27. ___-mo replay	52. Former Yankee Jeter
29. Prepare a bird for tracking	56. Reasonable
33. Put out, as a fire	57. Magna-laude connector
34. Possess	58. Dined
	59. Sheepish reply?
	60. Watch chain



Bethlehem United Church of Christ

423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-665-6149

Bethlehem Church is the home of the Groundcover office

[Sunday Worship Times](#)

8:30 am and 10:00 am

[Sunday school at 10:15 am](#)

Fellowship Hour follows each service

February Community Events – Welcome!

Feb. 6 (Sat.)

Feb. 9 (Tue.)

Feb. 10 (Wed.)

Feb. 12 (Fri.)

Feb. 13 (Sat.)

Feb. 14 (Sun.)

Feb. 23 (Tue.)

Feb. 26 (Fri.)

Bethlehem Concert Series: Khemia Ensemble (Suggested donation: \$20 adults, \$10 students)

Hops & Hallelujahs "Mardi Gras" at Conor O'Neill's, 6pm (A night of sing-along and fellowship)

Ash Wednesday: Imposition of Ashes: 6:00–9:00 am

Ash Wednesday Worship Services: 12:00 & 7:00 pm

Open and Affirming Bible Study

German Pretzel Sales, 10:30 - 12pm, \$1 or \$10 dozen

Bethlehem Concert Series:

Courant Young Artists Winner Showcase (Suggested donation: \$20 adults, \$10 students)

Open and Affirming Bible Study

German Pretzel Sales, 11:00 - 2pm, \$1 or \$10 dozen

VISIT US ON-LINE AT

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[www.youtube.com/user/BethlehemChurchA2](#)



bethlehem-ucc.org

More than selling papers

continued from page 4

"For vendors, it [Groundcover] is a tremendous opportunity to become an independent contractor and your own person. It's a lot of work but if you're willing to put in the work and the discipline it can be the means to an end. It's a way to get immediate income. For volunteers, it's a way to learn first-hand about homelessness so you can begin to shed some of the stereotypes that exist," she says.

When I asked her about the relationships she has formed as a result of Groundcover, she replied: "We're pretty much a family. We have bonds here. It hasn't come easy. We've lost people. We lost someone recently, she just passed this year. And she was part of our family."

While many members of the Groundcover family have been around for years, other vendors have joined quite recently. Kevin Spangler has been a vendor for Groundcover for about two months. He found out about Groundcover from other vendors several years ago, and he has recently found time to sell newspapers and also write for Groundcover between his three other jobs. Kevin washes dishes at Mezzevino restaurant four days a week and also works at Silvio's Organic Ristorante and Pizzeria three days a week. When he

has time in the day, he does construction work for a client who is remodeling a house.

Most days for Kevin begin at five or six in the morning at the shelter where he sleeps. Kevin's morning routine consists of breathing exercises, prayer, and motivational videos on YouTube. On a "Groundcover day," Kevin heads over to the farmers' market between seven and eight to sell newspapers. He does what he can to stay warm: sometimes push-ups, lunges, and squats.

"It's pretty slow for the first few hours. For the first hour I go around and scope out the best vegetables of the venue. Sometimes you get good deals if you wait until the very end," Kevin says.

Kevin usually sells newspapers until two or three in the afternoon, or until he runs out of papers. He says he works hard to provide for the baby that he and his girlfriend, Cynthia – also a Groundcover vendor – had recently. Kevin met Cynthia while working as a marketer for Liberty Tax. Kevin played the role of Uncle Sam, while Cynthia was Lady Liberty.

As for Groundcover, "I decided to get into it because I have sold

things in the past and I thought this was a great avenue for me. The writing part was an accident," Kevin said. He went on to suggest volunteer opportunities. "Bringing in food for the vendors or putting advertisements in the newspaper for your local business can go a long way."

Kevin has other goals besides providing for his baby. For one, he aims to become an impactful motivational speaker. Kevin believes that too many people think they're not good enough. He feels that if people were more confident in their abilities, they would make better decisions and succeed more

often. He lives by "kaizen," a Japanese word that means constant and never-ending improvement. Kevin is enrolled in Washtenaw Community College, and hopes to study psychology at the University of Michigan in order to help people change themselves for the better.

Behind the paper you now hold in your hands is a whole community of individuals with fascinating life stories, and hearts full of desires and dreams. Next time you purchase an issue of Groundcover, consider aspiring to learn something new about your vendor. The encounter surely will enrich both your lives.



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Washtenaw County Foster Grandparent Program

Foster Grandparents serve 20 hours a week and are matched up with volunteer stations according to their interests, community needs and distance between the volunteer station and the volunteer's home. Volunteers are then matched with youth that need extra support. Grandparents engage them in activities that develop literacy, provide emotional support and serve as a role model.



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- 55 years of age or older
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- Recognition events including our favorite, the Foster Grandparent Luncheon



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THINK ABOUT IT

Gun control: another cry in the wilderness

Part 1 — History and power of the NRA and what our leaders do or don't do

by Martin Stolzenberg
Groundcover News Contributor

I've avoided this one for a long time because it felt like "preaching to the choir" – too obvious and self-serving. But lately, with the terrorist killings becoming so horrifying, my family indicated that this situation cries out for discussion.

The rationales for denying gun control have become so farfetched that they demand explanation. The tack I have chosen is to look behind the scenes, at what the proponents of uncontrolled guns keep hidden.

Let's start with the driver of gun rights. Most people would say it is the National Rifle Association (NRA). They would be wrong. The NRA is just a cover, the bought-off mouthpiece for the gun manufacturers of America and its primary trade association, the National Shooting Sports Federation.

I am indebted to *AlterNet* of January 13, 2013 for the following history of the NRA's evolution.

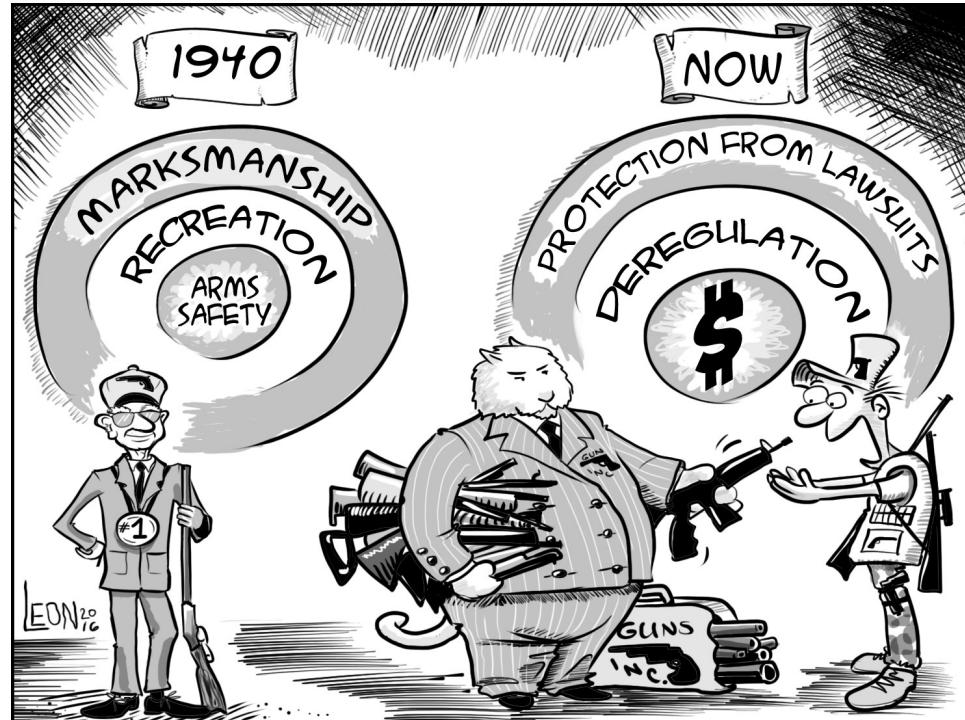
A history of the NRA

In 1871, when the NRA was started by two Civil War veterans, its motto and mission was "firearms safety education, marksmanship training, shooting for recreation." For 100 years this mission was carried forward.

The NRA had much to be proud of in the 1920s and 1930s, when they helped write and lobby for the first federal gun control laws. Also, in the 1920s the National Revolver Association, the NRA's handgun training counterpart, proposed model legislation. Eighteen states adopted these laws in some form.

State gun control laws at that time were not viewed as controversial. The use by gangsters of machine guns in the late 20s and early 30s led to the first federal gun controls: the National Firearms Act and the Gun Control Act. These federal firearms laws imposed high taxes and registration requirements on certain classes of weapons, making it quite difficult to buy machine guns, sawed-off shotguns and silencers. Gun makers and sellers had to register with the federal government. Former convicts were forbidden to legally obtain weapons. The Gun Control Act of 1968 reauthorized and deepened the FDR-era control laws, and the Supreme Court upheld these laws in 1969.

However, in the 1970s a faction of the NRA board resented the new federal laws. Gun dealers thought they were



being harassed. Rural states felt they were being unduly punished for urban America's problems, and more libertarian types just didn't want government controls at all. A movement started inside the NRA to usurp the old-guard leaders of the NRA who had promoted gun safety.

By the mid-1970s a new political rhetoric had gained momentum. A new NRA campaign was started, "designed to enroll and defend the right to keep and bear arms in numbers equal to the ranks of the patriots who fought in the American Revolution." The authors of this protective statement overthrew the old-guard NRA Board of Directors in 1977.

Power of the NRA

The stage was now set for linking up the NRA with weapons manufacturers. The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) was founded in 1961 to promote a better understanding of and a greater participation in hunting and the shooting sports. In 1963 the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute merged its promotional arm into the NSSF. In effect this caused the NSSF to become a spokes-machine for the gun manufacturers and opened the flood gates to financially supporting the NRA. And boy, does it.

Public tax returns from 2013 show that the NRA raked in \$350 million in revenues, with over half coming from weapons-related corporations and advertising. Much of this is attributable to the "Ring of Freedom" program which goes after big corporate donors – the members of the NSSF. The givers include 22 different gun makers. In other campaigns, gun-related companies promise to donate \$1 for each purchase made at the retail level. And in addition

to dues, the NRA receives donations from individuals, a source that has gone up markedly since Sandy Hook.

"Today's NRA is a virtual subsidiary of the gun industry," said Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center. "While the NRA portrays itself as protecting the 'freedom' of individual gun owners, it's actually working to protect the freedom of the gun industry to manufacture and sell virtually any weapon or accessory."

Politicians fear the NRA despite its claim to have only four million members (and this is judged to be puffery, with an actual count of only three million). When you consider that there are over 80 million gun owners, the NRA speaks for only four percent of gun owners. This is a tiny percentage of the overall United States population of 320 million.

Yet they have a powerful voice, especially with Congress. In the 2012 election run-up, the NRA contributed to 261 candidates for Congress, including 236 Republicans and 25 Democrats. While that's not a lot of spending in the big picture – about \$17.4 million – "They go back to states – specifically gun-crazy states – and run negative advertising, twisting voting records and attacking. The members vote their way because they are afraid of the consequences more than they want the money," stated one gun control proponent, Connie Ramsdell.

What our leaders do or don't do about the NRA

Here are a few important facts to help put things into perspective:

Congress in 2005 passed the Protection

of the Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA). This little dilly shields the gun control industry from any lawsuits or criminal action, even when a manufacturer makes guns that are unnecessarily dangerous or if a manufacturer sells to unauthorized dealers and a sale results in a shooting death.

The 10-year ban on assault weapons – such as the AK-47, Uzi and TEC-96 – enacted by President Clinton in 1994 was allowed to expire in 2004 at the behest of the NRA and weapon manufacturer lobbyists.

In 2012, the Republican pollster Frank Luntz found that 87 percent of gun owners supported criminal background "Brady" checks for all gun purchases. Following the December 2012 massacre in Newton, CT, the Senate considered such a bill. It was rejected because the NRA campaigned vociferously against it, threatening lawmakers with low NRA ratings when election time rolled around.

Congress has hamstrung The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF) – the organization that oversees the industry – by not allocating them enough. BATF's budget is dwarfed by those of other enforcement agencies, whose budgets are growing markedly, while BATF's has been stagnant for 10 years.

Congress passed the Dickey Amendment in 1996 to prevent the Center for Disease Control from funding research that could eventually relate to gun control. In a recent article, the *New York Daily News* reported that Congress allocates only \$5 million annually to investigate the causes of gun violence, while \$830 million is devoted to studying vehicle and traffic safety. This occurs despite the fact that about 100 people die each day from each of these causes.

The 2003 *Tiahrt Amendment* prohibits federal law enforcement authorities from giving researchers information discovered when tracing the origins of guns used in crimes. Before the NRA shut down this type of information, the BATF reported that one percent of gun dealers had sold 60 percent of the guns traced to crime. Now researchers can't get this type of information from the Freedom of Information Act anymore.

The BATF is also forbidden from creating an electronic database of the

see GUN CONTROL, page 12

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Caramel sea salt brownies

by Liz Baumann
Groundcover Contributor

Easy, perfect dessert for your Valentine!

Ingredients:

1 package fudge brownie mix
20 pieces individually-wrapped caramels
2 tablespoons milk
1 teaspoon coarse sea salt

Directions:

Prepare brownie mix as instructed on package. Put brownie mix in 8"x8" baking pan.

Make caramel sauce by microwaving caramel and milk on high for 1 minute and then for 10-second intervals until the caramels are easily whisked. Whisk until smooth. Drizzle on top of brownie batter.

Bake as instructed. After removing brownies from oven, sprinkle with sea salt. Cool brownies before cutting. These brownies are delicious with vanilla ice cream.

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Gun control

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names of gun purchasers, hampering the government's ability to take guns away from questionable owners.

Purchase of weapons at gun shows by private parties is completely unregulated. No records are required by act of Congress. An estimated 40 percent of all firearms transferred in the United States are done so by unlicensed individuals.

Congress won't pass a law allowing the

prevention of gun sales to those people on the "no fly" list who have been identified as dangerous by the Attorney General.

Be sure to read *Part 2* of this article next month, where I highlight more of what our leaders do or don't do about gun control, the role of the Second Amendment in gun freedom, the impact of not requiring gun permits or licensing in our country, gun protection in the home – and a way out of this violent dilemma.

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1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95

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